



Education Telecommunications Council

NOTES  
OCTOBER 29, 1999

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## **I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The October 29, 1999, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council was held at Iowa Public Television and various ICN sites. The following members were present: Joan Ketels for Bob Barak (Regents); Al Bode (ISEA); Gene Gardner (IACCT); Ron Ellis for John Hartung (IAICU); David Montgomery (DE/CIANS); Kathryn O'Shaughnessy (ISEA); Pam Pfitzenmaier (IPTV); Kay Runge (DE/Libraries); Mick Starcevich (SAI); Mary Travillian (AEA Boards); Emmett Vaughan (Regents); and Ellen Kabat (ETC Alternate for IACCT). Dean Borg (IASB); Paul Bowers (IAICU); Gary Hayden (AEA Boards); Connie Maxson (SAI); Gail Sullivan (DE); and Rich Gross (DE/Exofficio) were absent.

The following guests were also present: Mark Dayton and Kathy Williams (ICN); Stacy Rockhold and Julie Burrell (RTC 14); Buddy Sherbet (UNI Scheduler); Michele Laning (CR Prairie HS); Darlas Shockley and Becky Bedford (RTC 15); Chuck Chrisman (RTC 16); Karen Lombard and Marlene McComas (RTC 5); Todd Evans (Drake scheduler); Dana Rosenberg (EICCD); Winston Black, Al Green, and Jane Herrmann (RTC 11); Kathy Guilgot (RTC 1); Bruce McKee (RTC 2); Dave Ludwig (RTC 13); Roger Rezabek (RTC 7); and Paul Ollinger and Debbie Fiscus (IPTV).

## **II. ISSUES**

### **II.1. Spring Semester Enrollment Data**

Dana Rosenberg updated members on the spring semester enrollment data and responded to questions from the September ETC meeting. There were 11 PSEO classes that appeared to be offered from K-12 school districts but were, in fact, sponsored by higher education institutions--3 classes were offered in Region 6 with credit awarded by Marshalltown CC; 8 classes were offered in Region 15 with credit awarded by either Indian Hills CC or William Penn College. Discussion followed.

### **II.2. Update on ICN Issues**

#### **VOSS Scheduling Software--**

Kathy Williams updated members on the status of the VOSS switching and scheduling software and the operational aspects of the ICN. In order to test the end user issues related to use of Mac computers, Kathy made an appeal to the members requesting the use of a MAC computer for a couple of weeks to use in testing and troubleshooting the Macintosh end user problems associated with the VOSS scheduling software.

Changes and corrections to the software are continuing to be fulfilled by Todd and loaded into the software each week. For example, previously, there was a "cap" on how many sites could be in any given session, but due to software changes that "cap" has been lifted.

Continuing issues with Todd and the VOSS software: Larger sessions (sessions with a large

number of sites) have experienced problems in configuration. There was a design flaw in the switching software that Todd reports has been corrected. Some of the items that the ICN has asked Todd to address immediately include: 1) room use bill information, 2) reliability of "site availability" report, 3) email notification to schedulers on rejected sites. Kathy has informed Todd of the ICN's timeline expectations on turnaround time and regular updates. Kathy will be meeting with Todd staff to discuss the failures recently experienced on the platform concerning the web server and the connection manager for the VOSS software. Discussion followed.

### **Internet--**

Mark Dayton provided an update on the ICN Internet service and connections. On October 17, end users were moved to a new Internet gateway router and should see remarkable improvements. Any questions or problems should be directed to the Network Service Center.

### **ATM Conversion --**

Mark also provided information on the status of the ATM conversion in southwest Iowa.

Extensive work has begun on the conversion of sites in Council Bluffs with hopes of installing ATM equipment in some of those sites toward the middle of November with final conversion taking place during the Christmas break.

### **Test of the ATM network--**

In order to test the features of the ATM network and its interface with the existing DS-3 network, the ETC will sponsor the first in a series of "tests" on November 7 at 4:00 p.m. ETC, RTC, and TIE members were encouraged to participate in this test. The following ATM sites will be included in this session: Creston/CC3, Osceola/CC2, and Red Oak/CC2. Other ATM and DS3 sites will be included in this session at a later date. Members were encouraged to watch their e-mail for more details.

In preparation for the tests, members asked Mark Dayton the following questions with these responses:

***Q. What should we be aware of when participating in the ATM test--what can we expect to see any differences when viewing an ICN session originating from ATM sites to DS3 sites?***

A. The gateway is functioning quite well. One difference would be in the delay when pushing the push-to-talk microphone. A delay circuit will be installed in all educational sites. The audio pop and blur is the codec synchronizing backup on the switch. A software upgrade will correct this.

***Q. What about using a VCR at remote ATM sites?***

A. When you play a tape at a remote site, not the originate site, the audio goes directly to the speakers in that site and it also goes to the originate site and mixes with the other audio. At the remote site that is playing the tape, you hear the audio directly and also with a 1/2 second delay in round trip to the originate site. That makes the tape inaudible. One fix is to turn down the program on the mixer in the site that's playing it so they don't hear both audio inputs. The other fix is to put in a relay that mutes the audio automatically when you are a remote site. (Pam Pfitzenmaier informed members that Star Schools funds will be able to pay for this modification in educational ICN video sites, but those funds cannot be used to make the modifications in administrative sites (national guard, libraries, etc. The modifications are not terribly expensive--approximately \$30 per site plus labor.)

### **More ATM news--**

Kathy informed members that a press conference will be held on November 16 at 8:00 a.m. in the enhanced classroom at Starc Armory concerning the ATM conversion and plan completion. The Governor will be present as well as a number of the vendors who have worked with the ICN developing the ATM plan. Members are invited to attend.

### **Y2K Compliance "Roll"--**

Kathy Williams informed members that the ICN has been working diligently to insure that the ICN will be Y2K compliant. The test was done early on Monday morning, October 25. Kathy reported that the network "rolled" in a satisfactory manner. The results of this test will be announced officially at the November 16 press conference.

Switching and transport issues for video classrooms-- Members expressed ongoing concern about the continued problems with video sessions experiencing switching problems. As one member expressed, end users are getting frustrated because the same problems keep getting reported and progress in fixing the problems does not seem to be evident. Mark Dayton was asked whether the ICN is working to find solutions to the reported recurring problems.

Mark replied that he understands the concerns and asks that members give the ICN staff some time to work with Todd to correct the issues. He asked that end users continue to call in and report problems. Pam mentioned that the concerns about video sessions is a regular item on the monthly ETC agenda.

### **II.3. Plan for Testing of "In Advance" Components of VOSS Scheduling Software**

A meeting is being planned for the first week of November to develop a testing plan of VOSS scheduling software as it relates to in-advance scheduling functions. Five educational schedulers will work with ICN staff and Todd programmers to ensure that the components of the VOSS software meet end user and scheduler requirements.

### **II.4. Review of ETC Policy for "On Demand" Video Scheduling and the ITTC Policy**

## **on Cancellation of Video Sessions/Sites**

Pam requested input from the ETC, RTCs, and schedulers concerning two policies. The ETC established the "On Demand" document several years ago. ETC can make recommendations to the ITTC concerning the "Cancellation" policy since it affects billing of ICN connections. Feedback on the two policies is requested so that the ETC Operations Committee can submit a recommendation for action at an upcoming ETC meeting.

## **II.5. Transition Team Update**

Rich Varn joined the meeting via phone call. Roger Rezabek provided a visual presentation of Rich's remarks.

The first draft of the consultant's report (the Center for Digital Government) to the Information Technology Transition Team was rejected by the team as not addressing their request for services contract adequately. A second draft was submitted to the team, and Rich shared the findings of the second draft. In addition, the team members prepared and submitted a separate document that contained recommendations that differed from those offered by the consultants. More information about this report can be found at the following website: [www.info.state.ia.us/transitionteam/](http://www.info.state.ia.us/transitionteam/). Questions for Rich can be directed to his email address at [Richard.Varn@its.state.ia.us](mailto:Richard.Varn@its.state.ia.us).

Questions followed Rich's update. Some of those questions are highlighted here with Rich's responses:

### ***Q. What will be the role of IPTV in the transition?***

A. Per the recommendations from the team and the consultants, IPTV will remain under the umbrella of the Department of Education and continue to work between education and technology. As far as local ICN video classroom support is concerned, the consultants recommended that we merge the people together who do help desk functions.

### ***Q. What does that mean about the servicing of the classrooms, the engineers, that will be working with the video classrooms?***

A. Those engineers currently work for IPTV. It has not been determined if they will continue at IPTV. This will be a consensus decision between IPTV and ITS. The level of service will be maintained.

### ***Q. What happens to the ETC in the transition plan?***

A. The ETC will be maintained as it is now. Members remain as an advisory group to the Citizen Sub-Committee when the ITTC is disbanded in 2002. The ETC responsibility will expand to involve education technology in general as well as the ICN, and will serve as members of the governing council for

setting policy and standards for technology in state government in general.

***Q. Do you perceive this as being part of the legislation that will go to the legislature in the upcoming session or will this become part of the legislative rules after the legislation is passed?***

A. No, this will go to the legislature.

***Q. Tell me about your timeline. Are you ready to go to the Legislative Service Bureau with this?***

A. Yes, we are ready to go to the Governor with this first. He will decide what he does/does not like about it, make his recommendations accordingly in his legislative package.

***Q. I have a question about the relationship between the CIO and the governing board. Is this a relationship similar to that in the Department of Education with the State Board of Education and the director of the DE?***

A. It's more like the Department of Transportation where the Governor appoints the director of the DOT but the DOT board approves the budget, rules, and policy, and sets priorities for what they do.

***Q. What is going to be done to insure the equity of access by the "least" of the current users, especially those rural areas that are more expensive sites to connect? What's the role of the Citizen Sub-Committee and will they really have the interests of the end users at heart?***

A. How do we guarantee equity of access and extend costs, and how do we extend the infrastructure into rural areas? The infrastructure will mirror what we have now: five citizens taking recommendations from the broad range of Iowans to set the rates. In order for us to get the rural areas better served, in fact to live up to the vision of the ICN in serving all Iowans, we need to interconnect with the local phone companies in a way that helps everyone. The report says that the Citizen Sub-Committee members can be knowledgeable where the current law says ITTC members cannot be knowledgeable about technology. The Transition Team members recommended that they (CSC) should be knowledgeable about a range of information and education technology in order that they could make good decisions about rate setting, user fees, authorized users and things like that.

***Q. What kind of impact will this transition have on the RTCs?***

A. The RTCs will remain intact as they are now with the same relationship they have with the ETC who (in 2 years) will report to a 5-member Citizen Sub-Committee rather than the ITTC. The ETC and RTCs are a good example

of how we can work together to improve service, work on new technologies, and obtain good advice. The Transition Team recognized that and thought the whole operation should just be moved into this new departmental structure.

***Q. On the Citizens committee that you are envisioning, was there any discussion as to whether or not individuals might be from a particular background?***

A. There was some discussion about that. The only discussion focused on whether or not there should be people from the private sector technology background. It was thought that it should be similar to the make up of the ITTC, recognizing that individuals couldn't be on the CSC if there is an inherent conflict of interest.

## **II.6. RTC 7 ICN Classroom Survey**

Roger Rezabek provided an overview of the RTC 7 survey report. A copy of the summary was sent to ETC members. RTC 7 surveyed K-12 teachers and administrators in the region to discern their uses of ICN video classes and special events.

## **II.7. ICN Classroom Trouble Report**

Bruce McKee shared a document that he developed with the aid of Dick Stuffbeem of IPTV to use when reporting problems occurring in ICN sessions. An electronic copy of this report was sent to ETC members and RTC coordinators/chairs. Sites are encouraged to modify this document to suit their regional/institutional needs and to distribute to video classroom sites.

## **III. UPDATES**

### **III.1. Budgeting for Distance Learning Classrooms**

Paul Ollinger of IPTV provided an overview of a document that will aid sites with budgeting plans that include maintenance and replacement of ICN video equipment.

### **III.2. FY 2001 RTC Funding Request**

Pam informed members about the RTC funding request from the Iowa General Assembly for FY 2001. The request has been submitted to the Governor. Information about the request will be forwarded to the legislative liaisons for each representative group of the ETC.

### **III.3. E-Rate for Years 2 and 3**

Pam updated members on the E-rate for year 2 and 3. Year 2 requests from districts that were compliant/filed within the Year 2 window are in the process of receiving funding notification letters. She stated that the Year 3 form 470 process has begun (Year 3 covers July 1, 2000-

June 30, 2001.)

### **III.5. Comments from Guests**

Roger Rezabek stated that the recent IACT conference was successful.

### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The October 29, 1999, meeting of the Education Telecommunications Council adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next meeting of the ETC will be November 15, 1999, at Iowa Public Television.

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